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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 001291

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO SADC, NSC,  
DEPT TREAS, NAIROBI, RIO DE JANERIO ON 24 MAY IS BEING  
REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO.

QUOTE  
UNCLASS HARARE 001254

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: N/A  
TAGS: ECON EAGR PREL ZI  
SUBJECT: DESPITE CORRECT WORDS OF AGRICULTURE MINISTER,  
THE VAST MAJORITY OF COMMERCIAL FARMS AND MANY  
CONSERVANCIES REMAIN OCCUPIED AND LISTED

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED, PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.  
NOT FOR INTERNET POSTING.

¶1. (SBU) In a message carried on state television during the Sunday, May 19 evening news, the Minister for Lands, Agriculture and Rural Development, Joseph Made, said all the right things about formalizing the path forward in the land reform and resettlement program. He assured the viewing audience that the process would be orderly and legal (the latter in terms of Zimbabwe's recently enacted laws that legalizes expropriation), and complete by end-August. He also stated that occupiers on delisted properties, conservancies, church and other civil group lands, A-2 model designated farms, and properties protected under bilateral agreements, would be removed in coming weeks and resettled on properly designated lands. He said that commercial farmers would be entitled to a single farm and that if all farms were occupied, they would receive a new farm. His meaning and intent were clear and unambiguous, and at face value could offer comfort to the dispassionate observer. However, the reality on the ground, at least so far, is widely separated from the rhetoric. There has been some relocation going on, mainly in Masvingo Province, but from diverse reports it has occurred on black-owned farms claimed by party higher-ups or those already distributed under the A-2 scheme (the indigenous, small-scale commercial farming scheme). The independent press reported that occupiers were removed from farms recently ceded to the Speaker of Parliament (Emerson Mnangagwa), the Police Commissioner (Augustine Chihuri), and the Defense Forces Commander (Vitalis Zvinavashe). American and German properties in the Save Conservancy, located in Masvingo Province, are still listed and still occupied. The press also claimed that at some properties the settlers were resisting transplant, threatening to attack if made to move and claiming the land as payback for their vote for the ruling party.

¶2. (SBU) According to the Commercial Farmers Union and others, no illegally-settled occupiers have yet been removed from white-owned farms. We checked with the German, Dutch and Portuguese missions and the EU here, and all of them report that, despite bilateral investment treaties and government assurances of corrective actions, no properties have been either delisted (as promised) or cleared of illegal occupiers. The German Counsellor was especially critical of the GOZ's "lies and propaganda", saying that every German-owned property was listed despite assurances that this would be reversed (two weeks ago the German Foreign Ministry convoked the Ambassador from Zimbabwe to receive only yet more hollow assurances), and that use was being denied the owners despite the clear language of the investment treaty barring such appropriation without agreed-to, market-value compensation.

¶3. (SBU) The cause of Made's untypical behavior and sudden message to the nation may have been an unhappy Robert Mugabe. Two reliable but independent sources told us that on May 18, the day preceding the Made message, the President, returning to Harare from a funeral, made an unexpected stop at a white-owned commercial farm northwest of Harare that has been a large wheat producer (by one account nearly 10 percent of the domestic crop). The unannounced arrival of the extensive entourage caught the farmer, a Mr. MacKenzie, by surprise, but he gave the head of state a brief tour as requested. Mugabe pointed to a 75-hectare field occupied only by some daggga huts and wilted subsistence-style maize patches and asked why it was not planted with wheat. The farmer stated that under the new laws and having been served a Section 8

notice he had to halt all agricultural activities. Mugabe reportedly became angry and directed his staff "to sort it out". When Mugabe asked the farmer about tobacco preparations, the farmer again replied in the negative, saying that bank loans were precluded now that he was listed, that his present crop (already reaped) was his last due to the acquisition notice, which could lead to his imprisonment if he were to put in seed beds. Mugabe reportedly told MacKenzie to go ahead with the wheat planting, to which the farmer replied that it was already past the planting deadline, and his irrigation pipes had been stolen to boot. Mugabe reportedly again became very angry and told his staff to rectify the situation.

¶4. (SBU) We have also heard that UN SYG Annan raised the food/land issue with Mugabe in NY and was told that the GOZ would be returning to implementation of its Abuja Agreement commitments on land. We note that Made's May 19 statement returned to Abuja language in sharp contrast with its public and private language of recent months.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: Despite Made's public utterances of all the right words, the reality of government's actions on the ground, at least from our inquiries and observation, remains distant from the Minister's rhetoric. At least 94 percent of commercial farm properties have been listed, with foreign status making no difference, and the remaining 6 percent are unlisted only due to clerical errors, according to a contact of ours at the Lands and Agriculture Ministry. We shall watch keenly if foreign-owned properties are delisted and desettled, as a number of American-owned properties are currently subject to listing, occupation, or both. End Comment.

UNQUOTE

SULLIVAN